

Essay on about standardization

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



Standardization connotes ' uniformity of procedures' in administering and scoring tests. Standardized tests are for the purpose of comparing scores received by different persons. If the scores are to be comparable, the test and testing conditions must be same for all who take the test. Tests that are administered in an unvarying mode to all test takers are a standardized test. The principle of standardization is that the only independent variables present in the test should be the individuals taking the test and all other aspects must be constant.

In order to achieve uniformity of the testing conditions, the test owner / developer must provide detailed directions for administering the test.

Formulation of clear and unambiguous directions is a major part of standardization which includes materials used in the test, timing and time limits, oral instructions prior to and during the test, procedures for test administrators, etc.

Another important part of standardization is the establishment of norms (standardized tests are sometimes called criterion referenced tests). For this the test is administered to a large representative sample for whom the test is intended, for example, high schoolers, medical students, etc. This group of is known as the standardization sample, which serves as a basis to develop norms / criterion. Norms and Criterion help to compare the scores of two individuals or scores of the same individual in a test taken at different times. Composition of a standardized test may be made of multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, essay questions, or any assessment. Usually, computer does the scoring of standardized tests, but the case of open ended questions human scoring is adopted. One of the issues associated

with human scoring is that the agreement between scorers varies in valuations of the same test answer (inter rater reliability).

Interpretation of Standardised tests

Analysis of standardized test scores is of two types, a norm-referenced score interpretation and a criterion-referenced score interpretation. In norm referenced test, scores of test takers of a common test are compared. The purpose of norms is to rank a test taker in comparison with scores of other test takers. This interpretation will provide information about how well or how worse a particular test taker has performed in the test. In norm referenced tests, those who scores better than most test takers will pass the test and those who scores less than most test takers will fail the test. .

In Criterion based test, the scores are compared to a criterion (a formal standard) regardless of the scores of other test takers. This interpretation is to determine whether a test taker meets the criterion fixed. In this system, it is possible for all test takers to pass the test or all test takers can fail also.

Measures of quality of Standardised tests

There are two important measures which determine the quality of standardized tests, they are reliability and validity. Reliability is the overall consistency of a measure. A test score is said to have high reliability if the test produces similar scores under consistent conditions. Validity is the degree to which facts and hypothesis support the interpretations of test scores. For example if a candidate receives a high score in music aptitude test, that candidate must perform better in music course than those who

received lesser score. If a candidate who scored less in the test performs better in the music course, then the validity of the music aptitude test is low.

Advantages of Standardised tests

There are various merits to use of standardized tests. One is that the scores can be empirically documented; precise validity and reliability can be established, and the test scores can be generalized and replicated. Second advantage is the scores can be subjected to statistical processes and aggregation. Third is the tests are perceived as fair preventing discrimination based on race, socioeconomic status, or linguistic backgrounds.

Criticisms on Standardised Tests

But, there are plenty of criticisms and disadvantages associated with standardized tests. Two of the prominent criticisms are referred here; one is from William Ayers and another from Cathy Davidson. The sharpness of criticism can be experienced in the words of Ayers, W.(1993); he points out the inability of the standardized tests to measure an initiative, creativity, imagination, conceptual thinking, curiosity, effort, irony, judgment, commitment, nuance, good will, ethical reflection, or a host of other valuable dispositions and attributes of the test taker. He says that a standardized test can only measure and count isolated skills, specific facts and function, content knowledge, which are the least interesting and least significant aspects of learning. Similarly, Davidson, C (2012) in her book, Now You See It, criticizes the use of standardized tests as part of a one-size-fits-all educational model. She pin points the narrowness of skills being tested . She

disapproves labeling children as failures if the skills are absent or stamping the students with disabilities.

Introduction of AB 484 in the State of California

The use of standardized tests now has become a monstrous issue in the State of California, which has been using it profusely for decades together. Recent Assembly Bill 484, which came into effect from 1st January 2014, in the state of California, terminates the use of standardized tests (California Standards Tests) and other assessments collectively known as Standardized Testing and Reporting program (STAR). Assembly woman Susan A Bonilla, who authored Assembly Bill 484, says “ This is one of the most important and revolutionary change to education policy and California is the right state to lead the way. With this new law, our schools can move away from outdated STAR tests and prepare students and teachers for better assessments that reflect the real world knowledge needed for young people to succeed in college and careers.” It can be inferred from this statement that there has been a subtle disapproval of overuse of standardized tests.

Key features of Assembly Bill 484

- This law establishes the scope of new statewide student assessment system i. e. California Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress (CaMAPP)
- It delineates assessments in CaMAPP, and does not completely discard the assessments of Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program
- It necessitates local educational agencies (LEAs) to participate in the spring 2014 Smarter Balanced Field Test

- Permits LEAs to focus on changeover to Common Core standards
- Instead of isolated classroom tests, Field Tests are proposed
- Establishes the purposes of the 2014 Field Test as 1) enable the consortium to gauge the validity and reliability of the items. 2) Conduct necessary psychometric studies.
- It allows the use of a variety of item types and assessment modalities (e. g., population sampling, matrix sampling).

Instead of STAR, new student assessment system known as California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) came into being. The primary purpose of this assessment system is to aid the students, teachers, administrators and parents by facilitating higher quality teaching and learning through a variety of assessment approaches. CAASPP system is designed to follow a collection of national curriculum standards known as Common Core.

Common Core Principles

Common Core is considered as the first step in providing young generation with a high-quality education. It is an attempt to clarify to the stakeholders of education the students, parents, and teachers what the standards of success mean in the school life. The Common Core clearly communicates what is anticipated of students at each grade level. The teachers are oriented to equip themselves with knowledge and process to know exactly what is needed to help students learn and establish individualized benchmarks at each grade level. With students, parents and teachers all on the same plane and working together for shared goals, Common Core is putting efforts to ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from school

prepared to succeed in college and in the modern workforce.

With the termination of standardized tests in use and proposal for a new mode of assessment, it brings along several hesitations in the minds of the parents, teachers and students of California. The most prominent among them are ,

- The current legislation gives prominence only to skills and do not address the importance of content knowledge.
- The law assumes vague descriptions of skills; they don't include a reading list or any other similar reference to content.
- Key math assessments are missing or appearing in the wrong grades.
- The law proposes vague descriptions of skills; do not include a reading list or any reference to content.
- No teachers were involved while making the bill.
- The law does not refer to research or scientific evidences.
- The federal government probably tends to take over ownership of the Common Core Standards initiative.

Probable Effects of AB 484

The future of education in California foresee many changes under the influence of Assembly Bill 484, one by ending the standardized tests that have been in place since 1999 and second by implementing tests based on the new Common Core Standards.

As per the current scheme the students can take the new tests using computers or iPads or similar devices and the tests are moved from classroom to field tests. The educators now can focus on implementing the new standards and on students' learning of skills needed for career and

college.

Though critics point out that suspension of STAR tests will weaken schools' accountability to parents and the community, the supporters of the law argue that the current accountability system of ' No Child Left Behind' law is labeled ' failing' in majority of schools regardless of the impact it has on students for college, career and beyond. Similarly, the concerns regarding the new law are baseless.

My opinion on the New Law and Standardised Tests

I believe that maintaining two testing systems (STAR and CAASPP, each one requires different instructional techniques) at the same time, can result in chaos. Suspension of STAR tests and adopting field testing as new assessments challenges the educational leaders to prepare students in a completely different manner. We hope the educators are prepared to take up this challenge.

New generation students deserve an effective education that is fully focused in one direction, and that promising direction suited for current socio-economic scenario seems to be Common Core initiative. This opinion is not against standardized testing, and I still hold that standardized tests are useful tools for assessing student achievement. But, education is more important than the theories of testing. Being successful in life is more meaningful than the test scores.

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